

TRANSIORY.

... in a garden by the sea,
I watched the white gullsicker by,
... tall, red sunset in the sky,
... the gulls sail by on the wind,
Leaving the shore behind.
... the sun follow the sun
on the wings of the salt sea wind.
—London Society.

MOUNTAIN ROMANCE.

They were summering in the Santa Cruz mountains, the most delightful place in the most delightful state in the Union. The days were long, but full of merriment that extended rambles and sylvan discoveries confer. A fine stream, in which one could wade or bathe to heart's content, kept up its constant conversation like the hum of bees and fair-voices. How beautiful in the early morning was the light falling on the ranks of giant redwoods; and surely there never was a bluer, purer sky than that beat above it all!

Amy Desart, book in hand, sauntered down a leafy path, on which faint rays of light from the far sky sifted down through the redwoods' odorous branches, glinted on their scarred trunks, and fell like silver arrows into the rich shade of the forest. The book she carried was a protest. The day was dreamy, and what printed page could charm the eye, when there were a thousand distractions tempting the curiosity and challenging the admiration of a healthy nature? If a bounding bee, a vagrant bird, a clump of yellow violets, or a broad "golden bough" enough to speak to a poetic soul, or charm an artist's eye, who could tire of watching the grander beauties of a redwood forest, or weary of the sudden glimpses through opened boughs of the sublime blue mountains? So a book was quite a useless thing to Miss Amy Desart, but at the same time her habitual companion.

She was aroused from her lazy dreaming by a loud halloo. Indeed, she was not immediately aroused, for the hallooing had been going on for quite a respectable length of time before her drowsy consciousness stirred to the effect of something unusual; for hallooing, save for owls, was by no means common in those silent depths. Once aroused from her summer stupor, she listened with growing interest.

The calls continued at intervals, pausing, seemingly in expectation or hope of some reply. Miss Desart concluded, as she heard no responsive halloo from any other part of the forest, that the call was from some one lost in the wilderness. As soon as her half somnolent brain had formed this conclusion, her voice took up the idea, and when another desperate and far away shout came to her ear, she answered with a musical call from her vigorous young lungs, at the same time going in the evident direction of the sound.

She was heard, for a responsive call came in slightly louder tones, so she knew that, whoever it was, he was approaching her voice. Making a trumpet of her hands, she cried, "Lost!"

The answer came quite distinctly, evidently trumpeted in the same manner, "Yes."

She lost all her languor. Here was something of lively interest to occupy her time. "Who are you?" she called.

"John Westwood," she answered.

Unhesitatingly she plunged into the undergrowth and trackless ways of the woods, her guide the voice which kept up a rather one-sided conversation—if that can be called a conversation—as she only answered occasionally to show him that she was coping. She had no fear of being lost herself, for she had, time and again, roamed in the deepest and wildest parts of the forest, which was full of landmarks for her.

"Out hunting and lost-my-way," came slowly and detachedly to her ears.

She stopped and said to herself: "I've a mind to leave him to his fate. The idea of deserting this sacred place with a shot-gun!"

However, she proceeded to the rescue, determining to give Mr. John Westwood a caustic piece of her mind, when once he had discovered him. (It is safe to say here, in parenthesis, that she forgot her cruel intention long before she came up to him.) She picked and crushed her way through the bushes for a mile, it seemed to her, but distances are deceptive when you have to work your way.

At last, he, waiting, gave a halloo which sounded absurdly loud, when right on the heels of it the bushes parted, and a radiant wood-nymph, to be sure, in a becoming costume, of buff lawn, the soft, loose draperies of which she had caught up to protect them from the tempests, revealing thereby the stiff embroidered ruffles of an immaculate skirt, and faultless feet shod in neat French walking boots. But her cheeks were flushed; her eyes were dazzling, and a cloud of shining hair rested lightly on her white forehead. Her wide hat pushed back on her head by some saucy branch, served as a frame to a be-witching face.

She beheld a tall young man in fencer's buckskin, leaning on a rifle. His brown eyes were a shade softer than usual, from their weariness, perhaps. His face was clearly cut, and a dark mustache adorned his firm lip.

For more than a moment they gazed into each other's eyes, then laughed and bawled. After thanking her enthusiastically, he said: "I had the idea of compelling a young to my rescue. I thought, it was a boy who answered me, and fully expected to see a barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan, instead of—" he hesitated.

"You will see no barefoot boys around here," she said, hastily. "There is too great a fear of rattlesnakes."

"I have not seen any."

"Maybe not, for they are not fearfully prevalent, or I should not be here. But once in a while you come across an ugly fellow. I always go armed myself," she said, saucily, producing a tiny, silver-mounted flask from the depths of a capacious pocket.

It was but a glimpse of the flask he caught, for she plunged it back impudently, as if she resented the impulse of familiarity.

"If you will follow me—" she said shortly.

"With all my heart. I love the woods, but began to feel I should never get out of this. I have been wandering about, seeking a path which I could follow anywhere for six mortal hours.

"It's easy enough when you know the way."

"Ah, but every one isn't a dryad."

"No. I'm especially engaged for the summer in that capacity," she said, airily acknowledging his meaning. "When I'm at home," she continued, thinking previous confidence called for a like return, "I'm Miss Amy Desart, of—well, everything in general. We're nomads."

"I'm most happy, Miss Desart," began in the strict manner some people adopt when acknowledging an introduction. "To find in you an angel unaware, he concluded with regaled ease. "And—and" he went on mischievously, "I think I was bitten by a rattlesnake some time this morning."

She turned in alarm and met his eyes, in which he could not repress a twinkle. "Why, you said you hadn't any sure."

"I didn't see one, but I'm sure I must have heard a good many; and one could easily bite me and I not pay much attention to it, you know, in my perplexity."

She regarded him carefully, felt sure that he was a gentleman, and saw besides the mischief in his eyes a great exhaustion, that brought out the silver flash without further misgiving.

"I came off at this morning, without any breakfast," and one could see his weariness was real. "You know," he added, excusing himself, "I expected to be back at the hotel by 6 with a deer for breakfast."

"You are staying at F—" she asked.

"I was a village on the line of the railway, about a mile distant.

"I have been there for the last week, but intend to return to the city to-morrow. I suppose you can show me the way to F—?"

"Oh, yes. I am so glad it was full," she said irreverently, as he returned her empty flask. "You must have been very faint. We are nearly to the path; and Miss Desart's compliments, and will Mr. John Westwood deign to partake of an informal lunch at Hepzibah?"

"Mr. John Westwood accepts with due informality, not to say that he jumps at the chance. But where, and what in the name of the redwoods is Hepzibah?"

"Hepzibah—as the name signifies—is a place in the wilderness, rented during the summer months to campers for a small stipend. We have been down every summer for three years. But here we are."

He stepped out on the path and stood beside her. How fragrant and cool the woods were. The broad, leafy path made one sigh with pity for those who were bound to tread the stifling streets of the city. They soon reached the cottage, which was not far from where they struck the path. It was an idyllic repast that awaited them. Mrs. Desart was as lovely and cordial as her daughter, and Mr. Desart was full of bonhomie and unconcealed delight, at meeting any one so recently from the city.

"I wish I had had the good luck to lose myself in this vicinity a week ago," said Westwood, regretfully, as he was taking his departure, considerably later in the afternoon.

"Well, you can find your way here easily now, and we shall be glad to see you at any time," said paterfamilias, cordially.

"Thank you for your kindness, but my vacation ends to-morrow," he signed.

They all joined him on his walk homeward, to make sure of his taking the right turns and angles which were to take him to F—, and it seemed to him that Amy was even more beautiful in the tender twilight than before. They parted from him as warmly as from an old friend, with cordial hand shakes all around, and Mr. Desart told him to run down any Sunday when he wanted a breath of the redwoods—an invitation cordially seconded by Mrs. Desart, and shyly by Amy. They stood and watched him till he reached a bend in the road, where he turned and waved his handkerchief, at which three handkerchiefs fluttered in response, then the bend in the road hid him from sight. They turned back on the path with rather a long feeling for this bright young fellow, whom they had not known a dozen hours before, had proved such a jolly comrade for the few hours of their acquaintance, that they honestly regretted his departure. And though they would have disclaimed indignantly, and with truth, any suggestion that they had suffered enmity before his appearance, still they began to look forward to the possible Sunday when he would come again. They might have had visitors in abundance, of course. But, though not by any means selfish people, they were still not gregarious to any extent.

Their unusual instincts were probably due to their fondness for traveling, and the ease with which they had always been able to gratify that fondness. Amy, in fact, could hardly have told which was her own country. She was as familiar with France and Germany, as America, and Scotland she has always loved; But since they had discovered the redwoods of California, she was inspired by their grandeur to quite a strong patriotism, for, though cosmopolitan bred, she was California born.

The next Sunday, John Westwood could hardly conquer his desire to visit his new friends. But he felt that it would be better taste to let one Sunday elapse between his visits. He was not very much expected, to be sure, as they did not look for him before two or three weeks. But in that week, Mr. Desart received a telegram that demanded his immediate presence in New York. And in a few days this family, always prepared for such emergencies, were on their eastward way.

Mr. Desart, as politeness demanded, wrote a note of explanation and apology to Mr. Westwood, whose address he intended to transcribe from the San Francisco directory. His intentions were good, but when they had left New York and were far out on the Atlantic, he discovered the still unaddressed note in one of his many pockets.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the disappointment and surprise of Mr. Westwood, when in high spirits he set out on the woodland path, only to find a deserted house at the end of it. He repeated the visit at odd intervals during the rest of the summer and fall, but always with the same result, till he finally gave up in despair, and came near to believing that he had never been lost in the redwoods, but had fallen asleep on an enchanted hill-side (as Grimm's people do) and dreamed the whole thing.

It was late in September of the following year when the redwoods were flushed; her eyes were dazzling, and a cloud of shining hair rested lightly on her white forehead. Her wide hat pushed back on her head by some saucy branch, served as a frame to a be-witching face.

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ing year before John Westwood felt able to take his annual vacation from business cares. But the days grew so warm that he determined to break away from the hot pavements and ceaseless noise of the city, for a week in the mountains. But where? There were mountains north of him, mountains east of him, mountains south of him. He had only to choose. The mountains to the north were the Marin county branch of the Coast range, of which Tamalpais is the most prominent feature. But Tamalpais is visible from the city, so they wouldn't do. The same fault attached to the mountains to the east, that rises from the arid San Joaquin plains. Mount Diablo was their great feature, and its infernal majesty was plainly visible from the city. To the south were the Santa Cruz mountains, in whose depths the short-lived romance of a year ago was enacted. It is not strange that ignoring the charms of Mendocino redwoods, which necessitated a day or two of steamboat travel, and steering his heart against Donner lake and the snowy Sierras (which were rather far off into the bargain), he decided to seek the bracing mountain air in the Santa Cruz range. It was only a few hours distant from the city, and yet the place was a wild, untraveled wilderness—a wilderness possessing the great advantage of accessibility. One had only to strike out from the station at F— in any direction to lose himself—as he had once proved—in a virgin and primeval forest.

He had no hope of meeting his quondam acquaintances again. If they had been down at all, he felt sure they had flown off to the station at F—. He assured himself that he would not have wished to meet them, for they had treated him shabbily. It was a most contradictory impulse, then, that drew him the very first day of his arrival past the redwood cabin. If he had hoped for any sign of his will-o'-the-wisp friends, however, he was disappointed. No sign of life was about the place, and he avoided it in his future rambles.

The large streams that flowed through the forest were famous for trout, and to trout-fishing he devoted himself, as offering fewer opportunities for getting lost than hunting the wary deer. So with rod and line, a plentiful supply of light literature, and a sportsman's lunch basket well filled, he would start out for the day.

He was impartial in his choice of streams, and often angled in the one that flowed near Hepzibah. He chose that one to-day, and made his way up the stream for a long distance by leaping from stone to stone, or by walking the mighty length of the redwood trees that lay, as they had fallen, in and across the stream in every direction, and by wading with his water-defying boots in the beautiful smooth stretches of water.

At last he reached a place he judged favorable for angling and for reading. It was a redwood trunk, soft with mossy growths, hid among mighty boulders; and from this shelter his line could play on a smooth pebbly pool that promised lots of trout.

He ensconced himself comfortably, baited his hook, flung his line out into the stream, propped the pole up near at hand (which may be a scientific way to fish, but was quite in the way of a lazy young man), broadened himself at the top of his broad divan, chose the most conversational novel his pocket book, and lay down to sleep.

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